

Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee

Minutes

Tuesday 17 February 2026

Minutes of the Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee

**Held on Tuesday, 17 February 2026 at the
Cooke Park Pavilion, 17 Welcome Street, Parkes**

Present:

Cr Neil Westcott	Mayor
Cr Marg Applebee	Deputy Mayor
Cr William Jayet	Councillor

Mr Steve Lindsay	Deputy Chair
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Ms Kristy Berry

Mr Peter Giles

Mr Andrew Hall

Ms Kelly Hendry

Ms Tracie Robertson

Ms Treen Swift

Council Officers in Attendance:

Mr Anthony McGrath	Director Customer, Corporate Services and Economy
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Ms Lisa Moon	Tourism and Visitor Services Coordinator
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Mr Hamish Ritchie	Economic Development Specialist
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Mr Brendan Shipley	Manager Events and Tourism
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1 OPENING OF MEETING

The Chairperson will declare the meeting open.

Meeting of Council committees are not recorded or streamed to the internet.

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Parkes Shire Council acknowledges the Wiradjuri People who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land. I would also like to pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging of the Wiradjuri Nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginal peoples from other nations who are present.

3 APOLOGIES

In accordance with clauses 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice, apologies must be received and accepted from absent Councillors and a leave of absence from the Council Meeting may be granted.

Cr Joy Paddison Councillor (alternate)

Cr Doug Pout Councillor

Mrs Marty Sammut-Paul

Mr Andrew Rice Chair

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

4.1 MINUTES OF THE ECONOMY, DESTINATION AND EVENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2025

RECOMMENDATION

That they receive and confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18 November 2025 appended at *Annexure A*.

Minutes from meeting 18 November 2025 were confirmed.

Note: meeting did not meet quorum. This has been acknowledged in the minutes of that meeting.

Minutes from meeting 16 September 2025 were confirmed.

Note: due to quorum not being met in November meeting, minutes confirmed in this meeting.

5 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

All Council Officials must disclose and manage any conflicts of interest they may have in matters being considered at the meeting.

Council's Code of Conduct deals with pecuniary and non-pecuniary conflicts of interest and political donations, and provides guidance on how these issues should be managed.

Council Officials must be familiar with Council's Code of Conduct and their obligations to disclose and manage any conflicts of interest that they may have in matters being considered at this Council Meeting.

Note: Council Officials who declare an Interest at the Meeting are also required to complete a Declaration of Interest form.

No conflicts of interest declared.

6 LATE BUSINESS

7 OFFICERS' REPORTS

7.1 LOCAL DESTINATION REPORT (NOVEMBER MEETING)

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

1. Note the updates provided in this report on current Tourism projects and activities.

Acknowledged. No comments made.

7.2 LOCAL ECONOMY REPORT (NOVEMBER MEETING)

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

1. Note the update on recent Economic Development activity, including key findings from engagement for the CBD Vibrancy Strategy.
2. Flag if they would like to receive the draft CBD Vibrancy Strategy for review and feedback as an out of session action.

Acknowledged. No comments made.

7.3 LOCAL EVENTS REPORT (NOVEMBER MEETING)

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the committee review the update on the festival's status below as a Major Event for the shire.

Acknowledged. No comments made.

7.4 LOCAL DESTINATION REPORT

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. That Council note the updates provided in this report on current Tourism projects, marketing initiatives and visitor performance outcomes.

Acknowledged. No comments made.

7.5 LOCAL ECONOMY REPORT

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

1. Note the update on current Economic Development activity, including progress on the CBD Vibrancy Strategy, Brightening Our Brand initiative, and related projects.
2. (Optional) Provide any feedback they would like considered in the development of the Elvis Activation Kit for local businesses either through in meeting discussion or out of session communication.

Additional item discussed relevant to Economic Development.

Purple Flag Framework

- Council exploring adoption of the **Purple Flag principles** (safety, inclusivity, night-time activation).
- Not seeking accreditation yet; instead folding best practice into operations and future CBD planning.
- A cross-team working group established (Economic Development, Tourism/Events, overseen by Director Customer, Corporate Services & Economy).

7.6 LOCAL EVENTS REPORT

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee note the update on the events within the Parkes Shire.

Acknowledged. No comments made.

7.7 ENERGISE PARKES SHIRE

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

1. Participate in a structured discussion to explore the goals, scope, and components of a revitalised *Shop Parkes* program, including gift cards, digital presence, event activations, coordination models, and shopfront revitalisation.
2. Considers the merits of progressing the initiative and discusses potential approaches to delivery.
3. Identifies possible next steps or structures to support continued progress beyond the meeting.

Shop Parkes Social Media Review

- Decision made to **close the Shop Parkes Facebook page** due to:
 - Algorithm changes reducing organic reach.
 - Low effectiveness compared to paid boosts.
 - Ability to achieve better outcomes via Visit Parkes and broader Council channels.
- Communications strategy planned for March to guide followers to other pages.
- Committee discussion raised:
 - **Concerns about losing business unity and local audience focus.**
 - **Potential interest from businesses or Chamber** in taking over the page.
 - Questions around whether the page could be **mothballed/hidden rather than deleted.**
- **Council to explore:**
 - Whether the page can be hidden instead of deleted.
 - Discuss the issue with key stakeholders (particularly Marty).
 - Delay closure until further feedback received.

AI-driven tourism discovery and search tools

- Suggestion to explore **AI integrations** to ensure local content appears in itinerary planning and generative search platforms.

Shop Parkes Gift Cards

- Issues raised with gift cards not processing on certain EFTPOS systems (particularly integrated POS systems like Lightspeed/Shopify).
- Some machines require manual setup or cannot process chip-only cards.

- Noted that:
 - Cards still being purchased/spent, but limited functionality reduces value.
 - Program's impact is modest and mostly local; major spenders include IGA.
 - Long-term upgrade to tap-enabled cards would be costly.

Action: Review issues with specific stores (e.g., Red Chandelier) and liaise with Why Leave Town.

Empty Shopfront Activation

- Ongoing challenges securing agreements with property owners.
- A trial for a wrap on an empty shopfront progressing but hitting roadblocks.
- Committee noted:
 - Need for flexibility due to frequent tenancy changes.
 - Interest in movable panels/walls instead of full wraps.

General CBD Issues Raised

- Desire for improved **shopfront accessibility**; concerns that compliance triggers make small upgrades complex.
- Suggestion to explore **exempt development pathways** to simplify beautification/access upgrades.
- Ongoing issues with cleanliness and maintenance of footpaths and kerbs.

7.8 CBD VIBRANCY STRATEGY INITIATIVES

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

1. Note the overview of the 39 initiatives contained within the Draft CBD Vibrancy Strategy.
2. Provide high-level feedback identifying up to five initiatives they believe should be considered priority actions, including rationale for each.

Public consultation

- Engagement considered strong (≈800 datapoints).
- Feedback received during January consultation.
- Final version to be presented to Council in March.

Committee Discussion – Key Themes

- Concerns about contentious elements such as:

- Proposed **closure of Dalton Street** between Clarinda and Bogan.
- Removal of roundabouts.
- Raising road levels to curb height.
- Need for **careful communication**, as community sentiment is heightened.
- Importance of recognising:
 - Low-cost “quick win” projects vs. long-term infrastructure.
 - Realistic sequencing and dependencies.
- Recognition that the Strategy sets **vision**, not engineering detail.

Committee Observed Priorities (Emerging Themes)

- **Pedestrian safety**, especially:
 - Crossing near Woolworths/Clarinda St.
- **Disability access upgrades**:
 - More accessible parking.
 - Better kerb ramps.
 - Consistency with Changing Places needs.
- **Parking review**:
 - Taxi rank location.
 - Long-vehicle/van parking.
 - Wayfinding signage.
- **Wayfinding & amenity signage** (including public toilets).
- **Support for shopfront improvements** (signage, façade standards, accessibility).
- **Landscaping/shelter/green screens** noted as important in drought conditions.

Committee Decision – Workshop

- Dedicated workshop scheduled to prioritise CBD Vibrancy initiatives and form an official advisory position to Council.

Workshop Scheduled:

 **Wednesday 4 March 2026**

 **12:00 PM – 2:00 PM**

 *Venue to be confirmed*

- Purpose: Prioritisation exercise using whiteboards + voting (sticky dots).
- Outcome: Final recommendation to Council for March meeting.

7.9 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee:

1. Review and provide feedback on the proposed four-pillar structure outlining the key focus areas of the Economic Development function.
2. Provide input on the priorities, themes and areas of focus that should guide goal-setting within each pillar.

Economic Development Strategy – Framework Discussion

- Overview of proposed **four draft pillars**:
 1. **Building Resilient Businesses**
 2. **New Business & Investment Attraction**
 3. **Liveability & Vibrancy**
 4. **Planning, Data & Partnerships**

Additional themes raised for incorporation:

- **Diversification & innovation**
 - Preparing for post-mine and post-EWfW futures.
 - Supporting emerging industries.
- **Value-add agriculture & minerals**
 - Strong opportunity area for growth.
- **Better visibility of SAP opportunities**
 - Committee wants more structured communication from state agencies.
- **Need for Shire-wide (not just CBD) thinking**
 - Agriculture, freight, and mining sectors should remain in focus.

Members invited to send further ideas directly to Hamish ahead of the May meeting.

7.10 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO REVIEW**RECOMMENDATION**

That:

1. Note the economic development focus areas that support diversification and investment across the Shire outside the Energy from Waste proposal.

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2. Discuss opportunities to strengthen Council's role in population attraction, liveability and business resilience as key drivers of economic activity across industrial, agricultural, manufacturing and transport sectors.

Economic Development Portfolio Review

- Discussion centred on:
 - What industries and opportunities follow the EFW project.
 - Importance of using SAP as a long-term economic engine.
 - Desire for more regular communication from state agencies and stakeholders (e.g., RDA, SAP team, major employers).
 - Interest in presentations from key industries during future committee meetings.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Shop Parkes Facebook Page

- Determine whether the page can be **hidden rather than closed**.
- Consult with **Marty** about or future options.
- Delay final decision beyond March.

2. Gift Card Issues

- Review technical issues with specific stores (e.g., Red Chandelier).
- Follow up with **Why Leave Town** on integration limitations.
- Clarify which POS systems can support gift cards.

3. CBD Vibrancy Strategy Workshop

- **Workshop confirmed for 4 March, 12–2 PM.**
- Hamish to send calendar invite and confirm venue.

4. Economic Development Strategy

- Members to provide additional guidelines, priorities, and ideas before May.
- Incorporate themes of **diversification, innovation, and value-added industries**.

8 REPORT OF CONFIDENTIAL RESOLUTIONS

In accordance with clauses 14.22 and 14.23 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice, resolutions passed during a meeting, or a part of a meeting that is closed to the public must be made public by the Chairperson as soon as practicable. Such resolutions must be recorded in the publicly available minutes of the meeting.
